



PRESS RELEASE

Variant has been published periodically since 1987 as a magazine devoted to new areas in art in Scotland. Variant began with advance subscriptions and advertisements and since then has received occasional funding from the Scottish Arts Council. With the magazine operating on a shoe string and those producing it existing in a state of near penury, it has been impossible to develop the magazine in the way we had hoped, or to pay contributors. We believe that commitment of artistic and intellectual labour should not be an excuse to maintain such a situation, nor do we believe that progressive ideas, should necessarily be 'fringe' ideas, or that these can't compete in the marketplace.

We believe that any art activity is only as good, as multifarious and as widespread as the writing which accompanies it, grows from it and criticises it. We want to help contribute to an infrastructure for cultural activity, to give coverage of the large number of individuals expressing many different areas of experience in visual form, and by extension, defend this as an enriching and developing process. The counterpart in this is also to tackle those forces of thought which deny self-expression and inhibit self-confidence, a necessary role for a critical writing that is sadly lacking in the present climate.

The next issue of Variant will appear on SEPTEMBER 10TH. This will be a trial issue for a new Variant which we will aim to publish as a quarterly beginning APRIL 1991. This will comprise a more comprehensible format: news and previews, comments, features, interviews and reviews in a 52 page, perfect bound A4 format. With this, we will be able to respond more regularly to what's happening with an efficient turnover of production, so as to make the discussion of visual culture more consistent and responsive to a wider audience.

In this media pack you will find a questionnaire which we hope you will fill in and return in the envelope provided. This will help us to lobby support and build up a case for more funding. It also lets us know what the broad range of needs are in a quarterly art/ideas journal, but also helps clarify what we can provide. We do not aim to just reflect on what passes as culture, but to discuss its various contexts and to suggest new directions throughout the nineties.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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VARIANT

T/SOR/40/713

a radical arts magazine

"VARIANT" is a new Glasgow based magazine soon to hit the streets (if all goes well, which it hasn't so far). It sets out to discuss the status, role and value of art in the context of the modern world; in a time when our whole environment is saturated by the mass media and in a time when the technology at the disposal of modern capitalism further intrudes our space and our time.

Cultural activity is once again in a no-go period. The diversity and experimentation of late Sixties and early Seventies art activity is taking a back seat as cuts in the arts prevail, coupled with the art markets commercial interest in the so-called New Figurative painting. Added to this sombre state of affairs we may add that with the accomodation of punk culture (direct expression and a willingness to experiment) within the mind-grinding banality of the charts and the big labels eliminated the possibilities of a sub-culture of opposition of developing. As well as discussing the crossovers between popular culture and the elite arts, "Variant" intends to pursue the direction that the diversity of cultural activity is an important factor in the vitality of art in our daily lives. Activities over the last decade have illustrated this: Feminist art, video, film, text and photography, fringe theatre, performance, a return to the social roots of expressionist painting etc., are some elements which represent a broadening out, and they have, in some instances and in different ways, emphasised the social responsibility of artistic practice.

The discrepancies between what happens in the official art world and the everyday experiences of people are so blatantly obvious that it is surprising that a well thought-out concerted attack on the pathetic excuse that passes as Scottish 'culture' (see example right!) has not happened and the conservative coterie that dominate the art scenes in the West and the East Coasts' still get away with attitudes and forms of behaviour that should have disappeared with the plague.

"VARIANT" is for an art of ideas and seeks to contribute and to clarify the development of an independent means of communication by-passing and intervening in the dominant channels that the system passes off as culture.

Whilst conditions in the mid-80's may encourage a false despair, it could be the negative frontier of new fulfillments. A critical perception is arising that may fuel up the spirit of invention in these times of crisis.

